swallow it down

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swallow it down

by astronomical_light, ipsilateral

Summary

The sight of Callum squeezes at something in the center of Austin's chest, and it catches him off guard, because Austin's never wanted something *more* after he's had it.

This is new. He's not sure what to do about it.

A series of vignettes wherein Austin is Austin, Callum is a boom mic operator, and they try and fail and try again.

Notes

this wasn't GOING to be a real fic, but then we proceeded to write thousands and thousands of words on tumblr, so now here we are.

the tag for this verse can be found here, featuring all of the original snippets and assorted visuals. rough timeline and backstory is here.

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1: the morning after the first hookup

Chapter Notes

by astronomical_light

Austin is forced back into consciousness by the feeling of his head wanting to cleave itself in two. He grunts, burrowing his face deeper into a pillow that's too thin to be his own, and that's when he remembers.

A night out with the crew after wrapping the pilot. The first bar. The second. *Callum.* Lingering until last call as the larger group dwindled, emboldened by the knowledge they had the next day off.

When Austin finally manages to peel his eyes open, there's a bottle of Tylenol and a glass of water waiting for him on the nightstand, but Callum's side of the bed is cool to the touch.

Austin throws back two of the pills and chugs the water, sitting on the side of the bed, bare feet pressed to the carpet. He stares at the wall, somewhere between beige and dirty white with dark scuff marks down by the baseboards, and breathes.

The smell of something cooking wafts in through the cracked-open door, a trail of yesterday's clothes strewn haphazardly on the floor between it and the bed. Austin didn't expect to wake up here. He didn't expect *any* of this, not with how aloof Callum has been, meeting all of Austin's bids for attention with a face of placid professionalism and not much else. It's eaten at Austin, a curiosity he can't shake, like something stuck between his back teeth he can't pick out. The more Callum seemed to rebuff him, the more Austin wanted to get to know him, to figure out *why*, until it occupied more space in his mind than he knew was reasonable.

Austin could waste all morning sitting here, spinning out about what he's going to find on the other side of the door, or he could sack up and go find out for sure.

A rumble in his stomach forces his hand, and he gets dressed, grabbing the empty glass from the nightstand before slipping out of Callum's bedroom.

Callum's kitchen is cluttered in the way that kitchens are when there's

no real storage space; counterspace littered with stuff that doesn't have a home. A drip coffee maker and an electric kettle are nestled side by side instead of tucked neatly in a cabinet, a stack of cutting boards leaned on their side balanced against the backsplash, a half-empty bottle of olive oil and family-sized shaker of garlic salt lined up next to the regular salt and pepper grinders by the stove, and dishes towered precariously high in a drying rack next to the sink. Austin tries not to let all of the stuff out where everyone can see make him feel claustrophic, because it's not *messy*. It's lived-in, a room well-used for its intended function, and there's at least some semblance of organization amongst all the chaos.

It's galley-style, long but narrow, and it means Austin gets to take a good look at Callum's profile before he notices Austin is there. Unlike Austin, he's wearing a fresh shirt, fabric loose and faded, clearly comfortable. Plaid pajama pants cling to his thighs and end an inch too soon above his ankles, like they're a size too small or had shrunk in the wash, or are someone else's altogether.

His hair looks soft, curls frizzing out a little, fluffy and undefined. The back is flattened from his head being smushed into the pillow as he slept, and Austin wants to reach out and ruffle his fingers through the roots until it matches the volume on the top.

The sight of him squeezes at something in the center of Austin's chest, and it catches him off guard, because Austin's never wanted something *more* after he's had it. Getting what he wants bursts a bubble, usually, inevitably falling short of whatever he's worked up in his head—for better just as much as for worse.

This is new. He's not sure what to do about it.

Callum stirs a pot, and the smell of beans makes Austin's stomach churn, a wave of nausea rushing through him that must be written all over his face from the way Callum snorts as soon as his eyes land on Austin hovering nearby. "No one said you had to eat it, Princess," he says, which has Austin's insides turning in a completely different way. "There's eggs, too, and toast. Eat or don't."

"Thanks," Austin tells him, digging deep to pull his manners over how lost he feels, like he's been dropped in the middle of the woods with no compass, left to his own devices to find his way out. The sunlight streaming in through the window is useless, here. Knowing which way is east does nothing to help Austin figure out what to say to Callum. There's no moss covering the trees to point him in the correct

direction, and everything Austin thought he knew about how to approach Callum went up in smoke as soon as he let Austin go down on his knees last night. He's been navigating blind ever since. "You didn't have to go to any trouble."

Callum shrugs. "I'd have to eat whether you were here or not," he says, but then he stands up a little straighter as he turns to face Austin, shoulders squaring as he tucks his hands in his armpits but then seems to think better of it, scratching at an errant patch of stubble along his jaw. His face has gone serious, and a sinking feeling slithers down Austin's spine. "Look—"

"Don't," Austin interrupts, shaking his head. "I can just go, you don't have to—"

"Just sit down and have some fucking breakfast," Callum says, pointing to the breakfast nook on the far side of the kitchen, two benches and a small table situated underneath the window. There are already two plates piled high with food.

"What happened to *you don't have to eat*?" Austin asks, but he slides onto one of the benches, reaching for a slice of toast in acquiesence.

Callum sits across from him and then pushes a butter dish closer to him, ceramic squeaking on the laminate tabletop. "Don't act like you're not hungover just because you'd pick being force-fed beans on toast over listening to me talk."

Austin picks up the butter knife just so he has something to do with his hands. Callum must keep it out of the fridge, because the knife slides through easy, perfectly spreadable. He smears it on his toast instead of looking at Callum, eyes locked on his hands as he painstakingly drags the knife from one corner to the next.

Callum audibly exhales, and Austin's gaze flicks up for the briefest of seconds, but it's enough to clock the way Callum's mouth is curling up at the corner, smiling incredulously like he can't quite believe what he's seeing.

Austin shifts his weight on the bench. "If you want to talk so bad first thing in the morning," he says, brandishing his toast forward in an encouraging gesture. "Talk."

Callum's cheek goes concave, like he's sucking it between his teeth. He takes a deep breath before he says, "I shouldn't have let last night happen. It's not anything personal. I—" he pauses, dropping his eyes

down to where he's fidgeting with loose skin at the corner of his thumbnail, worrying it back and forth. Austin tries not to read into, tries not to think about how this is where Callum is supposed to say *I like you, I'm just not interested*, but he couldn't even bring himself to get the *I like you* part out. He looks back at Austin and smiles, but it's close-lipped, stretched thin. "I've had some real shitty experiences, you know? So I try not to shit where I eat anymore."

Austin chews slowly, but the toast is still dry when he swallows. He nods, trying to feel the understanding he knows he should. "I get it."

"No," Callum says, blunt disagreement that doesn't beat around the bush. "You don't, really. It's not your fault, but you can't get what this is like from my side."

"I don't—" Austin protests, frustration rising. It seems to be Callum's specialty, pulling reactions out of him that no one else can. "I'm just a *person.*"

"There's nothing 'just' about it," Callum says. Austin can feel the air quotes, and he hates that he knows, no matter how much he wants to deny it, no matter how much he wishes it wasn't true, that Callum is right. "So I just wanted to tell you, before anything goes too far, that it can't happen again."

Austin doesn't tell him there's no point. Austin doesn't tell him it's already too late, that Austin missed the warning signs and he's already in too deep, furiously treading water without a single clue of how far down it goes.

He finishes eating his toast. He gets another slice, shovels some eggs into his mouth, and listens to Callum tell him about some story about a building collapsing he'd heard on a podcast. He says goodbye in an awkward, aborted half-hug-half-handshake, and then he goes home, knowing in less than 24 hours he's going to have to see Callum again and pretend none of this ever happened. Knowing he has less than a day to convince himself everything is fine.

Chapter 2: austin taking callum home

Chapter Notes

by ipsilateral

Callum says, "This isn’t your room."

"What?" Austin looks around. "Yeah it is."

"It’s your room in that you own the place it comes in, but it’s not your room. Like, what is this?" Callum asks. He's walking around, touching the dried flowers shoved into an Adler vase and running his fingers over the marble dresser. "There’s nothing in here."

"Okay, it’s—not where I sleep, if that’s what you mean."

"What else would I mean? So you bring people here just to fuck," Callum states.

Austin opens his mouth automatically, except nothing comes out. He can't remember the last time he argued with someone. He can't even remember the last time he *wanted* to argue with someone. Bringing Callum to his place for one-on-one interaction without an audience had seemed like a good idea at the time; now he can't tell if that's really what he'd been thinking, or if he had just been distracted from Callum's presence by his side at crafty.

"No one's had any complaints," he says belatedly, unwilling to escalate to wherever Callum keeps trying to take them. Feel it, let it go. Leaves on a river. "It's nicer in here anyway."

"Uh huh," says Callum. "Right."

He leans against the dresser and crosses his arms over his chest. As usual, his outfit is frat boy lite: shorts, Sambas, a faded Amoeba Music tee, the everpresent plain black cap tilted high up on his forehead in indoor mode. Though Austin might not believe in the concept, he's listened to plenty of podcasts about body language and Callum is displaying all the red flags.

But he's not making a move to leave. If Austin bends just a little more, Callum is bound to give in.

"I don't know how to ask for this," Austin admits.

"Never had to?"

"No, it's not that," he counters, even though he's never had to work this hard for it, as douchey as it may sound. At least in the beginning stages. Austin is aware of the effect he has on people, but the way Callum is looking at him, he's starting to second-guess whatever it is he thinks he knows about himself.

"You know, I'm sorry but I don't get you," Callum says, gesturing to Austin as a whole. "I can respect it, but I really don't understand it."

"What's there to understand?" Austin asks, bewildered, and Callum smiles. "That's an actual question."

At that, Callum takes a moment. He's still got a smile on, but his eyes are considering, like he's trying to decide how much further to drive the knife in, or how much more to pare away until he's at Austin's core.

Not much, as it turns out, because all he says is, "Nothing. Kind of just feels like you've been in Hollywood for too long."

None of this is particularly funny. Austin laughs anyway, from the ridiculousness, sure, but also possibly from relief.

"What kind of cliched shit is that? I don't know what kind of game you think we're playing. Seriously. I don't know what you want from me."

Callum points at him. "See—right there."

"What, am I missing some kind of credential? You guys get that at a 'real people' convention that I'm not invited to? Jesus," Austin says, sharper than he wants to. "You're making this impossible."

Bizarrely, this seems to soften Callum up. He uncrosses his arms and rests his hands over the edge of the dresser. "You want me to be here?" he asks throatily, still looking way too attractive for how much he's getting under Austin's skin. "You can tell me to go."

"Show yourself out if you want," Austin shoots back. For good measure, he adds, "Fuck you," in an awkward fumble, which makes Callum finally stride across the room and take Austin's waist in a firm hold. When Austin leans forward, Callum angles back out of reach. "Cal," he says, verging on a whine.

"Just wanted to see you for a second," Callum murmurs.

Austin swallows. Tries to stay still, tries his best to look like what Callum is searching for. The proximity alone is making him sweat. Callum observes him for what feels like years, apparently no stranger to self-control. Eventually he slips a hand over Austin's ass and pushes their hips together, then spins his hat around backward by its brim as if he's got work to do.

"Take me to your room," he says. "The real one."

"The cleaners skip this room," Austin stalls.

Wordlessly, Callum toes his shoes off and enters. He had tramped around everywhere else without bothering, but evidently feels the need to leave them in the hallway here. Austin takes a beat to glance down at the custom insoles nestled inside before following.

By any standard, his room is a lived-in cave. Curtains drawn, empty dishes stacked bedside, the comforter balled up and unwashed. Clothes and shoes littered around in piles of clean, wearable, questionable, and offensive. A pile of moleskines are threatening to tip over on the desk. Austin remembers too late that a copy of *The Let Them Theory* is also sitting on one of the pillows, but thankfully it's facedown.

Callum ventures further in. Austin trails him to the entrance of the en suite, retracing his steps like he's a realtor in his own fucking house. The counter is a mess, lotions and serums and toothpaste sprayed everywhere, a mouth guard abandoned in the sink where he'd dropped it that morning. There's even a mini-tube of clear mascara sitting in plain sight, which Callum nudges with his finger until it rolls to a stop against a bottle of cologne.

Austin rubs his eye, then hides his hands in his pockets. "I told you, it's nicer in the other room. Smells better, too. I don't know why you even want to be in here, no one else has ever—"

"Hey," Callum interrupts, and he's right there all of a sudden, ducking in for a soft kiss before Austin can react, pliable and gentle like he's left his prickliness at the door, too. When Austin doesn't relax, he pulls back. "Aus. I still have a housemate. There's an old burrito under the couch that's basically petrified. I don't care about any of this."

"I care," Austin mumbles.

The gap between wanting to believe Callum and truly believing him remains wide as ever. Callum seems to understand this. He simply says, "I know," and ducks in again, hands roaming, unzipping Austin's jacket and peeling it off. His button down is next. Pants, socks. Underwear, after sparing a long moment to rub mindlessly against Callum's thigh. Callum remains fully dressed, which Austin would have qualms about if not for the pace becoming more urgent.

All he can think is, *about time*.

They stumble toward the bed, crumbs and shoelaces and magazines digging in underfoot. Callum pushes him onto it, then drops to his knees, palms dragging over Austin's body as he goes. Clearly he has experience and enthusiasm—he swallows Austin down, no hesitation, hands-free. Austin props onto his elbows to watch, shifting into the role of grateful receiver, letting out a small moan and dropping his head back to bare his neck.

Anyone else would take that as a sign of encouragement. Callum takes it as a sign to stop.

"Tell me what you like," he says.

"I like that." Austin rights his head to make eye contact. "It feels good."

"Tell me what you like," Callum repeats, holding Austin's cock out of the way to talk because he's *actually trying to have a conversation about it*.

"I like what you're doing," Austin says desperately. "I like it, I'm telling you that I like it, are you listening to me? Are you trying to get on my dick or in my head?"

Callum's face flickers. "You genuinely think—"

"What?" Austin challenges.

An ugly part of him wants to say, fuck it. Fuck this whole thing. He doesn't have to endure being whiplashed back and forth any longer than he already has, dick out or not. He can have Callum leave and jerk himself off alone in the safety and quiet of his own bed.

Callum changes tack. Lets go, leaving Austin's cock to rest on his stomach as he licks firmly up the underside and all the way to the

head, where he wiggles his tongue in rapid little darts before closing his lips over it and sucking. Austin's hips lift off the mattress in response, abdominal muscles crunching instinctively against the overwhelm. An ugly noise tears out of him.

"Shit," he breathes. "Shit, that's—wait, too much, too much."

"Okay," Callum agrees. "But better?"

"Yeah," Austin says immediately. "Just. Slower."

"Alright. Tell me, just like that."

Callum takes him in again. After a few seconds, Austin untenses. Drifts his hand downward until it meets the fabric of Callum's hat and he palms it, moving in tandem with how Callum is bobbing up and down slowly now, using his fist to supplement.

It's fucking good. More than good. Better than most, especially considering this is the first time. If Austin lets himself think about it, he's always preferred to begin less intense, leaving room for it to build. Inch by inch, he melts into the warmth of Callum's mouth. Callum keeps going, steady, occasionally quickening his tongue, only ratcheting up the overall pace every minute or so. When he cups Austin's balls with his free hand, Austin twitches.

"Softer," he rasps. "Please."

Seamlessly, Callum obeys, crooking his fingers and letting the tender skin rest on his knuckles instead. Austin's mind zips into blank static, listening only to his own heaving breaths, each exhale breaking off at the end into a high whimper. Once he makes the connection that they're coming from his own self, he clamps his entire throat down tight to cut them off. They escape anyway when Callum readjusts his angle and takes him deep once more, thumb rubbing over his taint, tip hitting soft palate with a muffled choke before pulling off.

"*Fuck,*" Austin grits through his clenched jaw.

In between kitten licks and scraping a trace of teeth all over, Callum chides, "Don't do that."

"Don't—unh—don't do what?" Austin pants.

"I wanna hear you. How else am I going to know what you like, huh?"

Austin's cheeks flare hot. "Come on," he manages.

"I need you to say it," Callum says, stubborn. He rubs his bottom lip over the slit, then sticks his tongue out to tap the flushed head against it, which doesn't feel particularly amazing but the image is fucking filthy and burns itself into Austin's retinas. Maybe that's the whole point.

He alternates between staring at Callum's mouth and the MLB logo on his hat. "Can I," he starts.

He trails off into a frustrated sound because Callum holds him at the base and doesn't touch him otherwise, the picture of patience. Austin is half-covered in spit and his own precome. The bottom half of Callum's face is equally as wet.

"What if I fucked your mouth?" Austin gets out.

"Is that what you want?"

"Yes. Yeah, yes. Please," he says again.

Callum scrapes his nails the wrong way over neatly manicured hair. "Happy to oblige, then." He raises up a bit, using Austin's hips for stability. Fits his lips around his cock and waits in yet another image that'll probably stay with Austin until his deathbed.

Experimentally, he pushes in. Callum creeps down some more. Holds there. Austin flops fully onto his back and uses his shoulders as leverage to go deeper on the next. Callum rears back to cough but resettles to the same spot. Finally, Austin knocks Callum's hat off and buries his fingers in his hair, raising it out of its flattened shape as he sets a rough rhythm.

Callum gets the hint; slides both hands under Austin's ass and helps him thrust up. He's making gagging noises every now and then but seems to pay no attention to them. They hadn't even closed the door. Austin would be worried about how sound carries on this side of the condo, except Callum's fingers are spreading and pulling his cheeks apart with a single flex and he really couldn't give a shit about anything else.

Austin's thighs start to shake. Without stopping, he warns, "Cal."

Callum's answer is to groan and knead at Austin's flesh. The span of his hands is huge. Austin shoves in for a last time and comes, hard,

thinking about Callum fingering him, Callum holding him down and fucking into him. For what feels like ages, he bucks helplessly with Callum's nose jabbing into his stomach before going slack with a final grunt—

—which turns into cursing because Callum doesn't let him go. He just eases the pace, coasting and downshifting, throwing in brief moments of suction that make Austin's legs kick. While Austin was thinking they were done, Callum is treating it like they've notched onto another starting line.

Brand new territory. One where Austin isn't sure he can go.

He floats through it. Swims with more effort when the delirious haze mutates into trickles of anxiety. There's orgasm and then there's this, some unknown beyond where he knows his foundational level of control would cease to apply.

At length, he groans, "Cal. Jesus. I—fuck—I can't. Stop."

Callum does, popping off with a savoring glide. He rests his chin on the crease of Austin's leg and makes no move to clean his face up. There are tear tracks reflecting off the corners of his cheeks that Austin can barely look at.

"That was—" Austin drapes his forearm over his forehead and tries to catch his breath. He searches for a word but comes up short. "What the hell was that?"

A chuckle brushes over him. "I don't know. Was it good?"

Austin wants to laugh. *That was great.* He's said that to dozens of people over the years. Meant it every time, too, or at least he thought he did. He can't remember who that person was now, even though he had been that person up until they stepped over the threshold to his room less than half an hour ago.

"Good," he echoes thickly. "Yeah. It was good."

"You made it good," Callum tells him. He clears his throat. Scrapes his nails over the hair on Austin's belly again.

"Stop looking at me," Austin says to the ceiling.

"What am I allowed to do, then?"

"Not that."

He needs to get up the energy to reciprocate. That, or kick Callum out. Instead he rolls onto his side and smashes his face into the folds of the comforter, inhaling the familiar smell of himself, his room, his house. He's an empty vessel, a slate wiped clean.

The mattress dips as Callum crawls on and spreads his long body behind him. When Austin blindly reaches for his cock, Callum brushes him away.

"Austin," he says. "Don't go back in there."

"Where?"

"Into your chrysalis or whatever. Okay? Just stay with me here for a little while longer."

"What are you talking about? I am," Austin says. "Couldn't move even if I wanted to. I'm dead."

"You know that's not what I mean."

"Okay," he says, not even aware of what exactly he's agreeing to.

Callum sets a hand over Austin's chest, grounding him. Austin doesn't turn. He will, soon. In a minute.

Chapter 3: getting caught

Chapter Notes

by ipsilateral

They've been careful; the both of them, though Callum more so than Austin, since only one of them has experience getting fired mid-shoot for being late or wearing the wrong color shirt or just existing in general. One director had said, *He's throwing too many shadows*, and that's all it took. Almost a decade later, Callum still has him on his shit list.

They're working on exteriors that day, so Callum had grabbed a heather gray t-shirt to mix it up, which turns out to be a mistake because it's nearing 30 degrees by noon and he's sweating his balls off under direct sunlight. No reprieve comes until they finally break for lunch at half two.

"Jesus Christ," he mutters. The other boom op, Gary, seems similarly gassed and they both spend a good minute flapping their shirts against their chests as Gary chants, "Hydrate, hydrate."

"I got it, I got it," Callum dismisses.

He heads to the welcoming shade of crafty. The Gatorades are warm but better than nothing and he chugs half of it down before flipping his hat around to tip the rest in without impediment. Austin passes by mid-gulp, catching his attention and holding it for a beat too long, eyes the same color as the liquid waterfalling down Callum's throat. Blue iced lightning or some shit.

He rights his head. Wipes himself off with the back of his hand and tosses the empty bottle into the trash as he follows Austin's steps past video village, across the lot, ducking past a couple set guys, and to the trailers, where a shock of air-conditioning welcomes him as soon as he enters.

"Fuck," he groans, eyes closed, arms held out like he's giving in to an alien abduction. "That feels amazing."

"It's rough out there," Austin says sympathetically. "Sorry about that."

"You control the weather?" Callum asks, squinting one eye open.

Austin sucks his cheeks in, playing at embarrassment perfectly. Only, Callum is starting to suspect that this is just how he is all the time, somehow. He hasn't let up on the charade once. Callum hasn't ever seen it, anyway.

He drops his arms. "Not your fault. Obviously," he relents. "You got me on a string, might as well have the weather, too."

Austin's expression clears, eyes changing shape into something more playful. He nods at Callum's belt, which—he's gotta remember to grab more gaff tape before lunch is over. "You wanna take that off?" he asks, then adds, "I won't let you forget."

Callum is already unclipping and tossing it onto the couch. He goes for the shirt next, but Austin is there to put a stop to that, slipping his hand under the hem to lay it flat over Callum's bare stomach. His palm is cool enough that Callum hitches forward a bit by instinct.

"Your shorts are sagging," Austin says. He flicks his thumbnail against the elastic band of Callum's underwear to demonstrate.

"Wardrobe's gonna murder me," Callum deadpans. "Are you gonna let me take this off?"

Austin moves his hand up, treating each rib like a speedbump that he has to slow down for and wiggle into. Up further, until he's swiping his fingers into the dampness under Callum's arm to wick away whatever hasn't soaked into his shirt.

"Nah," he says. "I can take care of that for you."

Callum studies him. The perfect hair, the pink lips, the skin smoothed by makeup and HD-ready. A flare of possessiveness burns through him at the sight; at the private knowledge that there's carpet burn on Austin's left knee and a bitemark on one asscheek, fading pink and vein-blue after two days. Callum will put it there again, if Austin lets him.

Another private thought floats to mind: Austin will let him.

"You're killing me," he says calmly.

"We have to be back in twenty," Austin says, as if Callum hadn't even spoken. He gestures at the vanity with his chin. "Coconut or cucumber fresh?"

Callum blindly fumbles for any travel-sized bottle and squirts it into Austin's free hand. He's curving his other around, skating it between Callum's shoulderblades and emerging through the back of the neck. Callum sways forward, not aiming anywhere in particular, and Austin catches his mouth with his own, easy as a lobbed ball. It's a chaste kiss, especially considering that he's also unsnapping the button of Callum's shorts and working his way in.

"Hi there," he mumbles. He grasps at a tapering chunk of hair on Callum's nape. "I didn't get a chance to say that this morning."

"That would've been weird," Callum mumbles back, even though this is a good set and most of the actors greet the crew every day by name. He notches his hands over Austin's hips before remembering one of their rules—no evidence, including wrinkles—and adjusts under the untucked shirt, spreading his fingers wide, massaging at bone and sinew with deep flexes.

"Keep 'em there or else wardrobe actually will murder me," Austin says.

"Yeah, yeah," Callum responds, and he's barely gotten the words out before they transform into a pocket of wordless air instead as Austin finally wraps a fist around his cock. Cucumber fresh. He takes control of his tongue again and manages to say, "I might die in here before I get a chance to do any damage."

"How complimentary," Austin says with a small laugh.

He pulls back to look, mouth hanging open while Callum huffs into it. It's stupid, how much this added veil of secrecy gets him off. The fact that it's with Austin Butler is a whole other layer of *what the fuck* that hasn't fully sunken in yet despite everything they've done.

Austin picks up speed, then stops moving to rub the pad of his thumb over where Callum is already wet. Involuntarily, Callum groans, a shattered noise that he'll be angry about making soon enough. He rocks his hips back and forth to make up for the sudden stillness and Austin tightens his hold, breathing hard just from watching.

"Fuck," Callum says, reedy, still using Austin's hand. "I want to touch you, please, I want—just say you fell asleep on the couch or something, I don't give a shit."

"Cal," Austin says. He closes his eyes when Callum cups a hand under the crotch of his trousers and gives him a firm squeeze. "Don't—don't

tempt me."

"You're the lead, you can spare a few minutes to change," Callum pleads.

Austin won't. He knows that, but in a fucked up way it feels good to ask for something he's not going to get. To show weakness that he only lets out in the thinnest of slivers, a pressure release to prevent himself from begging for it in earnest. Here, he at least has the excuse of being so horny that he's out of his damn mind.

Austin is jerking him faster again. He doesn't slow this time; probably has a ticking mental clock going of how many minutes they have left. Not like he has to worry. Callum has been hard up for it practically since arriving on set and, in another *what the fuck*, Austin is sort of an expert.

Maybe humiliatingly quick, he chokes out, "I'm gonna come," and Austin knows the drill, though he gets in a few more strokes even after the warning. "Austin, stop—"

"Sorry," Austin rasps.

He finally lets go and takes a step back, barely leaving a safe enough distance, but that's not Callum's responsibility so he gets busy shoving his shorts and briefs down to finish himself off. Through slitted eyes, he sees Austin observing him through all of it. The view disappears when he tilts his head back to rest it on the door.

The door that rattles against his skull as someone knocks on it from the outside, calling, "Austin?"

"Oh fuck," Callum whispers, legs trembling.

"Yeah," Austin calls back loudly, gaze still glued to where Callum hasn't stopped moving. "What's up?"

"I got your coffee. And like, four other people's," says the voice. Samantha, Austin's PA, sounds like she's right behind Callum. "You wanna open the door? I don't have any hands free."

"I—hang on just a sec," Austin yells. Then, in a hush, he says, "Jesus, Cal," and that rat bastard is smiling, a wild look cutting over his face like a flare.

He grabs Callum's other hand and sucks the first two fingers in, biting

sharp mid-knuckle, and the pain pulls Callum over a very far, very high up edge as he comes, noiseless. Overall he does a pretty good job of staying as quiet as possible, except he slumps over unthinkingly and his ass hits the door. The latch jiggles in a clatter of plastic.

Austin releases Callum's hand, tensing his tongue a little to leave one last drag of spit on his fingertips. "Sorry, the door is sticking," he states. "Give me another second."

"Okaaaaay," Samantha sings.

Callum's brain is offline, but sparks back to life enough to raise his arms when Austin pats at them. With a swift yank, his shirt is at last off over his head, only to *fwump* to the floor as Austin drops it right on top of the streaks of come.

"You dick," Callum mouths. He automatically scoots to the side as Austin reaches past him, pretending to wrench the door open. Great acting. Oscar-worthy.

"There we go—so sorry," Austin is saying. "I let JB know about it but I'm not sure when it'll get fixed."

"No problem," Samantha says. There's a long pause where there should be footsteps walking away and Callum holds his breath, but thankfully she only bids Austin goodbye.

Austin closes the door. Stares at nothing for a moment, then turns to look over his shoulder at the couch. At Callum's utility belt piled on the cushion in plain sight.

"Oh," Callum says blankly.

Chapter 4: austin sees callum with someone else

Chapter by astronomical_light

Chapter Notes

by astronomical_light

Austin didn't know Callum was going to be here.

He almost thinks he's seeing things when he catches sight of Callum out of the corner of his eye, but even with the haircut he's gotten since the last time Austin saw him, it's impossible to mistake Callum for anyone else. He's as dressed up as Austin's ever seen him, the usual uniform of cargoes traded in for black jeans and a black t-shirt to match. His hair is shorter on the sides now, cleaned up neatly at his nape but still long enough to curl on top. Everything else is the same —the bulge of his chest when he crosses his arms, the way his shirt clings to his stomach, the way his eyes light up when he grins. It's familiar, a recognition Austin hadn't realized how much he missed until it was forcefully thrown in front of him.

It's enough to make Austin forget about the weeks of radio silence, because Callum looks *good.*

Austin hangs back instead of immediately approaching, observing Callum in his element. Callum has to know that Austin is here, but he hasn't made any attempt to find him all night, and the realization sits heavy in Austin's gut, lining his insides with lead. He doesn't think Callum is avoiding him; they hadn't parted on bad terms by anyone's defintion, let alone theirs, and the only reason Austin hadn't reached out was because he'd spent the past three months worn down to the bone, exhausted enough to fall asleep before his head even hit the pillow most nights.

Callum had texted a few times. Austin knows it's his own fault that he stopped.

He's caught deep in conversation with Becca, the key grip on the project Austin had just wrapped up. They're close, clearly comfortable with each other, shoulders brushing as they talk to the small group of people clustered around. Austin watches them, how they don't talk in turns, finishing each other's sentences and interrupting one another

with bright laughter, emphasizing a point with a playful shove every now and then.

It makes static fill Austin's ears, loud enough to deafen all the sounds of a party in full swing.

He should find someone else to talk to instead of continuing to spy, but he spent the past two hours trying to carefully peel himself out of conversations and buy a moment of respite after making his initial rounds. He's *tired,* but it's not quite late enough to justify excusing himself without a reason. He has to stay a little while longer, but if he doesn't leave soon he's not sure he'll be able to stop himself from doing something he might regret.

In the end, as per usual, Callum makes the decision for him.

He leans in to whisper something into Becca's ear, a hand disappearing behind the small of her back before he slips out of the circle of people and makes a beeline directly to where Austin is standing, not even pretending not to stare.

"Well, look who it is," Callum greets, stopping close enough to Austin that he can feel the body heat radiating off him. "Long time no see."

Austin transfers his weight between his feet, suddenly wishing he had a drink in his hand. He's gone cottonmouthed, words drying up on his tongue, and he smacks his lips to try and wet them. "I just got back into town this morning," he says, an apology and an excuse tied up in the bow of a factual statement. Production had blocked out half the hotel for preliminary media this afternoon and then the party tonight, so Austin hadn't even been home yet; he'd come here straight from the airport. "I was going to call, soon."

"You're looking very… tan," Callum says, breezing past Austin's declaration. He pokes Austin's cheek and then looks at his fingertip like he expected some of the color to rub off.

Just the tone of Callum's voice is enough to ignite something inside Austin, an ember that burns in demand to set Callum right. It's not about putting him in his place, he doesn't think, because that would only be proof positive for everything Callum thinks about him—and Austin thinks it's more about wanting to prove him wrong.

He looks Callum up and down, as obvious as announcing his intentions with a megaphone. "You want to catch up?" he asks, tilting his head up slightly even though he doesn't have to. Callum isn't that

much taller than him, but he knows what it makes him look like.

Callum's eyes flash, and Austin knows he has him. He smiles, the one that makes his cheeks round out a little, continuing to peer at Callum through heavy lids. Austin could easily seize the moment, pull Callum aside and drag him anywhere Austin wants to take him, but there's something that's taken root deep in Austin's core, and it wants Callum to be the one to break. It wants, more than anything, for Callum lose the willpower he loves to pretend he's above needing to have.

It's a stalemate, but they're both too stubborn to be the one to give in first.

"What'd you have in mind?" Callum asks, finally, faltering in the face of Austin's prolonged silence. He hooks his thumbs into the belt loops of his jeans, rocking back onto his heels.

The blatant fidgeting makes the corner of Austin's mouth lift, a smug satisfaction curling up the edges. He tucks his index finger in next to Callum's thumb, tugging him forward by the waistband. "I've got a room upstairs," he says. "Why don't we go somewhere a little more quiet?"

Austin slips Callum his spare room key, both cards still tucked in the paper sleeve for safekeeping, and then starts the circuit of goodbyes he needs to do before disappearing for the rest of the night. He's buzzing by the time he finally makes it to the elevator, slumping against the cold metal interior in a confusing state of keyed-up exhaustion. If he closes his eyes he's pretty sure he'd knock right out, the combination of a travel day and interviews and socializing all catching up to him, but knowing Callum is waiting for him is more than enough to keep him from crashing.

The elevator hums as it carries him up to his floor, and a chirping ding echoes through the empty air to announce his arrival. Austin walks to his room on autopilot, one foot in front of the other, mind already racing three steps ahead. The lock doesn't take the key on the first swipe, or the second, light staying steadfastly unilluminated, and Austin's about to go for a third attempt when the door swings open from the inside.

Callum starts to lean nonchalantly against the jamb, but Austin pushes him inside with two firm hands on his chest, making him stumble. Austin kicks the door closed behind him and then pins Callum to it, pressing the fronts of their bodies flush together.

“Baby,” Callum grins, wide and wild, none of the restraint he’d put on display downstairs anywhere to be found. “It really has been too long.”

“I didn’t get the chance to ask what brought you here,” Austin says, diving into the side of Callum’s neck. “New girlfriend?” He doesn’t wait for an answer before sealing his mouth over the exact spot he knows will make Callum’s knees buckle, scraping his teeth over sensitive skin.

“If you’re talking about Becks, she’s my *housemate,* you headcase,” Callum says, gasping when Austin bites down on the strong line of muscle. “Besides, her girlfriend would cut my cock off if I tried anything, and I find I quite like it attached to me, thank you very much.”

Austin pulls away, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand before meeting the smug look on Callum’s face with a flat stare. “You’re not funny.”

Callum raises an eyebrow. “Who says I’m joking?” he asks, rubbing his hard-on against Austin’s hip.

“So you’re not her best boy, then?” Austin counters, working his thigh in between Callum’s legs to give him something better to grind into.

Callum throws his head back when he laughs, putting the mark Austin had bitten into him on perfect dsiplay, shining with spit under the harsh entryway light. “Who’s the one with jokes now?” Callum asks. He leans forward, making Austin go cross-eyed as his lips graze over Austin’s cupid’s bow. “You and I both know I’m not anyone’s best boy.”

Austin knows it’s bait, but he takes it anyway, clutching Callum by the ears to drag him in for a filthy, open-mouthed kiss. He fucks his tongue against Callum’s, groaning at the pleased hum that rumbles out of Callum’s chest.

“You and I both know I can be real bad for you, too,” Callum says, breath hot on Austin’s face.

“Can you just shut up for once?” Austin asks, chasing Callum’s mouth to make him.

Callum grins as he leans just out of reach, dirty and crooked like he knows exactly what Austin’s thinking. “Can you make me?”

Austin narrows his eyes, but Callum only smiles wider in challenge, so Austin has no choice but to sink to the floor between his spread legs. The thin carpet isn't enough to protect his knees, but he doesn't care when gets his hands underneath the hem of Callum's shirt, pushing it up to reveal the swell of Callum's stomach, the soft layer of fat surrounding sturdy muscle. Austin knows just how much power is lying beneath it all, and he knows Callum knows how to use it.

Callum's jeans hang low on his hips, leaving the waistband of his underwear visible, and Austin lists into him in a daze, nosing at the wide patch of hair under Callum's belly button before sinking his teeth into soft flesh, sucking it into his mouth.

He has no idea where Callum is going to go after this, but he'll have to wear the evidence Austin was there first for whoever might come after him.

Austin bites a belt of bruises into his skin from one hip to the other, hands coming up to knead at Callum's thighs as Callum's hands tangle in his hair, pulling long strands free from their product-filled hold.

"Someone's real mouthy tonight," Callum observes, accent thickening in the way it does when he's too turned on to bother enunciating clearly, pitched down into a low rumble. "Something on your mind?"

Austin looks up at Callum through his lashes as he pops the button on his jeans. "Nothing in particular," he says. He licks his lips, a slow and intentional swipe of his tongue as he drags Callum's underwear down until the waistband tucks under his balls. He's hard enough that his dick stands up on its own, the tip of it pushing out of his foreskin, and Callum sucks in a sharp inhale when Austin presses a chaste kiss to the slit.

His hand comes down to grasp Austin's jaw, squeezing gently. Callum pushes the pad of his thumb into Austin's mouth, and Austin takes it in deep between his teeth, eyes fluttering closed as he lets out a soft moan.

"Remember, Austin," Callum says, the condescending lilt to his voice underscored by how breathless he sounds. "You can have whatever you set your mind to. The world is yours for the taking."

Austin pulls Callum's thumb out of his mouth with a wet pop. "Anything?"

Callum smiles. "You just have to ask for it."

“I’m not asking,” Austin says. He unfolds from the floor, pulling himself up to his full height. “I’m telling.”

“Oh?” Callum asks, eyes glittering. “What are you telling?”

“You’re going to fuck me hard enough I forget how long it’s been since the last time,” Austin informs him, nipping at the flushed swell of Callum’s bottom lip. “So hard you don’t have the energy to think of anyone else after, even if you wanted to.”

Callum’s eyes darken, the barest hint of blue encircling pupils that are blown wide. “If you want to have me all to yourself, then you’re gonna have to take all of me,” he says. He juts his chin out, looking at Austin down his nose. “Can you take it?”

“You know I can,” Austin breathes into Callum’s mouth before capturing it in a wet kiss, lips sliding smoothly against each other as he teases Callum’s tongue with his own.

“Yeah,” Callum agrees, hoarse with desire. “You gonna remind just how good you can be for me?” he asks. “Or has it been so long you forgot that, too?”

Austin walks himself backward toward the bed in answer, dragging Callum along by the front of his shirt as he goes. They lose their clothes, tumbling onto stark white hotel sheets, wrinkling the crisply pressed fabric as their limbs tangle together.

“You have stuff?” Callum asks, nudging his nose against Austin’s before getting sidetracked by another kiss, languid and luxurious.

“Inside pocket in the carry-on,” Austin tells him, nodding to where his suitcase is spread open on the floor. He rolls over onto his stomach as Callum fetches the supplies, pulling his knees up underneath himself and closing his eyes while he waits.

The bed dips when Callum climbs back into it, and his hand settles on Austin’s waist before skimming up and down his spine. “Missed this,” he says, which isn’t the same as *missed you,* but it’s close enough.

Austin folds his forearms and then buries his face in them, breath coming in shallow bursts as he tries to settle. There’s a yawning need inside his chest that’s making him feel cracked open, but Callum is about to fill up all his empty spaces, so all he needs to do is wait.

Callum snaps the cap of the lube, and then there are two blunt fingers

circling Austin's hole. He shivers at the cold, but the searing heat under his skin warms it up before he can complain. Callum teases at his entrance, rubbing back and forth until Austin feels like he's dripping wet, never pushing for more.

"Callum," Austin whines, rocking his hips back. "Come *on."*

Two fingers immediately hook in Austin's rim, barely to the first knuckle, but the sudden stretch is enough to force a needy moan out of Austin's chest.

"I think I said you just have to ask for it, didn't I?" Callum says, inching his fingers in deeper. It's a sweet slide, but it's painfully slow, and Austin needs *more.*

"More," he insists. It's muffled from his face being smashed into the cradle of his arms, and Callum pauses, ceasing his movement altogether.

"What?" Callum asks, all put-upon innocence. "I didn't catch that."

Austin's entire body clenches in frustration "Cal," he begs. "*Please."*

Callum fucks his fingers the rest of the way in, finding Austin's prostate with laser precision. Austin groans in relief, and he rolls his hips back in time with the rhythm Callum sets, working in tandem until his cock is leaking a steady stream of precome down onto the sheets.

He grunts when Callum presses in with a third finger. "No, let's just go," Austin says. "I'm ready, I'm ready," he chants under his breath. "I promise."

One of the things Austin has always respected about Callum is how he never tries to talk Austin out of something. When Austin manages to tell him what he wants, Callum never doubts him—if anything, he doubles down, pushing the limits even more.

Callum slides his fingers out, and Austin's body coils tight in anticipation. His senses are heightened, and the crinkle of the condom wrapper sounds earsplittingly loud, followed by the squelch of lube as Callum slicks himself up. Austin slides his jaw side to side, trying to release the tension he'd built up from grinding his teeth, and he lets his chest sink down deep toward the mattress, increasing the arch in his spine to a steep curve.

This time, Callum doesn't tease. He steadies Austin with a firm grip to the side of his hip as he lines himself up, then pushes into him until he's fully seated, splitting Austin open the exact way he needs.

Callum doesn't take his time, setting the fast and furious tempo Austin had asked for, balls smacking obscenely against Austin's ass with every thrust. He rails Austin with everything he has, and the room fills with the undeniable sounds of their indecency, choking gasps and bitten-off moans that do nothing to hide what's going on behind the closed door.

Austin trembles, already so close to losing it when Callum fists a hand in the back of his hair. It's still overgrown from his last role, enough that Callum can get a generous handful as he pulls hard enough Austin has to crane his neck back, arching up and away from the pillow.

Callum folds himself over Austin's back, the thin layer of sweat they've both worked up making their skin slide together, slippery and overheated. "Isn't this what you wanted?" he asks, panting into Austin's ear. "Don't hide from what you asked for, sweetheart."

"*Cal,"* Austin moans, mouth falling open as he shifts his weight back even more, taking the pressure off of his neck.

Callum wraps his free arm around Austin's middle and then sits up, pulling Austin into his lap as he goes. Austin lets his head drop back onto Callum's shoulder, gasping at the change in angle as Callum holds him upright, fingers splaying up over his chest to brush against the hollow of his throat. The hand that was in Austin's hair drops down to his hip, digging in as he fucks up into Austin so good he sees stars.

Austin feels contained, *claimed,* completely encompassed by the strength of Callum's body.

"You think you could come just from this?" Callum asks. "Without me touching you, just from me in you?"

Callum nails Austin's prostate again and again, pounding into him with perfect control. Austin comes with a strangled moan, throat clicking as his orgasm shatters him into a thousand tiny pieces, all the work he'd put in to holding himself together undone from how well Callum knows his body. Callum fucks him through it until Austin is whining from the overstimulation, electric pulses shooting off under his skin with every thrust, a pleasure so intense it hurts.

Tears well up behind his eyelids, and Austin feels dumb with it, mouth hanging open and unable to do anything except take what Callum has to give him. He collapses face-first into the pillow, unable to support his own weight.

Callum slows his rhythm, long strokes mellowing out into a slow rock of his hips before he stops, moving to pull out.

Austin clenches down. “No, don’t,” he slurs, voice thick and watery as he lazily pushes himself backward. “Keep going, *please*.”

He lets out a low whine of disappointment when Callum pulls out, but Callum just rolls him over onto his back, hiking one of Austin’s legs up over his shoulder before pushing back into him.

Austin goes boneless, body helpless to do anything except lie back as Callum thrusts with a flurry of harsh grunts, the exertion clearly taking its toll. He doesn't let up until his own orgasm takes hold, and he drives as deep into Austin as he can go, pelvis grinding against Austin’s as he spills inside the condom.

For a moment, Austin doesn’t hear anything except for the ringing in his ears, and then there’s a sniffle, and he realizes it’s him.

Callum grabs his face, one hand cupped on each side, and he swipes his thumbs across the damp skin covering Austin’s cheekbones. “Look at you,” he says, laying a kiss at the corner of Austin’s eye, still leaking. “You took it so well.”

Austin squirms, trying to wriggle out of from under the microscope of Callum’s studying stare, but Callum keeps him in place. He dips down to bring their lips together, a kiss that’s softer than all the rest, the crackling friction from earlier completely wrung out of their spent bodies.

“I'm glad to have you back,” Callum says, tucking an errant strand of hair that had fallen over Austin’s forehead behind his ear.

“Yeah,” Austin says, unfocused eyes unable to do anything other than stare up at the ceiling. “Me, too.”

Chapter 5: and the aftermath

Chapter by ipsilateral

Chapter Notes

by ipsilateral

Callum wakes up alone with his thighs sticking to the sheets. The hallway light is on, buzzing faintly, but everything past the mini-fridge is swathed in dark save for a sliver of sunlight cutting in where the curtains don't quite meet. Somewhere down the hall outside, a door shuts and a group passes by, their conversation swelling and fading into silence once more.

Fuck, he thinks. Blearily, he checks his phone. 08:42, 13% battery. No notifications, even when he swipes down on the screen just in case.

He wouldn't put it past Austin to have done a runner, though there's enough evidence to the contrary: suitcase yawned open in the middle of the room, clothes strewn over the carpet, armoire with a jacket hanging inside. When he checks his phone again, there's no change. Just the normal stock blue background undulating slowly. Callum scrubs his face, then almost pulls a muscle stretching, soreness making itself known in his quads and a spot on his back that could be a knot or a bruise from where Austin had pushed him only hours ago.

If Austin had actually left, at least he’s bound to be physically feeling it, because Callum sure as hell is. The thought doesn't bring him as much satisfaction as it once would have.

"Fuck," he says out loud, before rolling over onto his stomach and burying himself with the weight of his own godawful decisions.

He's about halfway through the process when a keycard beeps, too loud to be anything but for this room. Reflexively, he rears up, then settles back down just as the door opens, a secondary instinct to feign sleep that he regrets as soon as it happens. It's a move he's never been able to pull off, or so he's been told.

But still. Maybe the darkness is helping, since Austin removes his shoes and is clearly trying to keep the noise down. There's a crinkle of a paper bag and two cups being set on the glass coffee table. Keys and the flop of a wallet. Callum stirs, then stills again, wondering how

long to keep this up. Even this seems like a battle of wills.

Behind him, Austin has gone quiet. It lasts for long enough that curiosity wins out and Callum eventually turns his head to face the rest of the room.

Then he just stares. And stares. Stares some more, because Austin is wearing Callum's outfit from the night before. The bottoms are a little big, held up low on his hips like he hadn't bothered using a different notch on the belt, but the shirt fits almost perfectly, tapering down his back with the sleeve seams sitting on the right places. Callum had noticed he'd gotten bigger; sure he had, but they hadn't exactly had an opportunity for a close examination of how much.

Callum swallows. Smacks his tongue like he's only now waking. "You wearing my clothes?"

Austin turns, startled, revealing a lit up phone in his hands. The blue and gray boxes on screen are visible from the bed and Callum can't help but wonder who the fuck he's texting when Callum couldn't get a text back for the length of a full season.

"They were the first things I picked up," Austin says. He's got his sunglasses propped up high on his face, mostly acting as a hairband. They slip down as he leans over to place his phone onto the bedside table, which—Callum tries not to look. He really does. By the time he gives in to the temptation, the screen has gone black anyway. "Morning. I, uh. I got bagels and coffee from that place."

"What place?"

"That place. You know."

"Did I fuck away your communication skills last night?" Callum asks. The words are sharper than he means, not landing too well on this side of daybreak. He lets a languid smile play over his mouth to temper them. "What place?"

"The place you like. You went there basically every day when we were shooting."

Callum blinks. "That's like twenty minutes from here."

"It's not so bad on a Saturday morning."

Austin meets his gaze. With the headband-cum-sunglasses, he looks

like a typical Southern California dickhead. Regrettably, he also looks like everything Callum has been thinking about on the daily since they last saw each other. Someone who doesn't speak to him for three months but begs to get fucked and cries about it and then brings him bagels with coffee in the morning.

In silent invitation, Callum rolls over onto his back. "You got big."

"A little."

"You look good."

"A little," Austin repeats, lips quirking.

"You know you look good," Callum says. He turns down the comforter since it seems like Austin either isn't getting the hint or is holding out. "You like it. People eating out of your hand."

Austin huffs. "You don't have to put it like that."

"I can put it how I want," Callum parries, but that was enough of an agreement on Austin's end to sand off the final raw edges of waking up like he had. He tugs the comforter down further, slipping his leg out from underneath. "C'mere. You're staying 'til when?"

"Wednesday."

Austin crooks his arms overhead and tugs off the shirt neck first. Pauses when Callum orders, "Hang on. Taking some mental pictures."

"Huh. Same," says Austin, eyes drifting down Callum's body to his hips, his soft cock, the crook of his knee. Callum props his head on his hand and lets him.

The belt goes next. Austin actually has to fully undo the button and zipper before he can get the jeans off. Evidently he'd forgone underwear before leaving. Callum pictures denim scraping over tender skin; twenty minutes in the car sitting raw, each step a reminder of Callum full up in him.

Complete dickhead. Complete fucking bastard. Callum digs his fingers into his scalp to stop himself from reaching out. When Austin lies down, Callum moves closer and slings an arm low over his belly, the equivalent of coaxing an animal out of its cave just to grab its scruff. Austin uncurls a little and relaxes into the hold. In the following quiet, Callum can even pretend that whatever they have is something

normal. That they're not just starting over at square one except with more baggage tied and dragging behind them.

"I did miss you," Austin says into the empty space.

"Yeah," Callum says into his ear. The bagels are probably getting mushy. They should get up soon. "Missed you, too."

Chapter 6: jealous!callum

Chapter Notes

by ipsilateral

Callum puts his phone down. Drums his fingers over his stomach and stares at the ceiling until the shower shuts off and Austin finishes doing his ten-step routine. He emerges fully dressed, hair coiffed, accessories glinting, moving easily through the room to grab everything else he needs for the night. Suit jacket picked out of the closet and slung over the armchair, bowtie laid atop it, phone and keys that he'll hand off to Samantha.

In contrast, Callum is just wearing his boxer briefs and going nowhere at all.

"Everything good?" Austin asks, stopping at the foot of the bed.

Callum hums, then scoots down the mattress and raises one bare foot to rest it over the front of Austin's trousers. "What's your Erewhon order anyway?"

It only takes a moment for Austin to process the question. "Oh, come on," he says. He grabs Callum's foot and kneads it. "You know that's not true, right?"

"I know she gets the Coconut Cloud, but the article didn't mention yours," Callum insists, curling his toes.

He would feel stupid bringing it up, except for the fact that he gets a reaction. The casual air shifts at the same time Austin's face sharpens into a tense plane, tipping Callum's mood up an equal amount.

"It's not true," Austin repeats. "It wasn't anything and I know you know that."

"Oi. Rentboy asked you a question," Callum says. He digs his foot in, tracing around the shape of Austin's dick, and another spark of triumph strings his body tight when Austin thrusts into the pressure. "Feet fucking is extra if you don't tell me."

"Otherwise it's free?" Austin shoots back, annoyance rearing its angelic head at last.

In answer, Callum opens his other knee to the side and fondles himself blatantly. Austin watches him, unaffected by the show, if not for how Callum can feel him hardening, still holding his instep with a clammy grip.

Finally, Austin swallows. "Turmeric Crush."

"Sounds refreshing. Packed full of antioxidants," Callum pants, pushing even though Austin has likely slammed that window shut by now.

Sure enough, he doesn't receive a response other than Austin rubbing up against the sole of his foot in regular rhythm. Callum gets a hand around himself; strokes a few times before easing the elastic of his underwear down, only enough so that the tip of his cock is peeking out and trapped against his belly.

"You wanna do that up here?" he asks, motioning.

Again, Austin says nothing. A telltale sign of true anger that's thrilling in a childish way, like they're playing some twisted version of hide-and-seek. Still—he listens. Drops Callum's leg back onto the mattress and stalks around until he's level with Callum's head. Callum takes a manicured hand in his own, then guides Austin's pinky into his mouth, craning up to reach all the way to the metal nestled at the juncture of it.

He bites down. Eases off with the tip of his tongue holding the ring steady.

"Tastes like a fork," he lisps out.

"Yeah?" Austin asks roughly. He's already working his belt buckle loose. "What else do I taste like? Turmeric?"

Callum spits the ring into his palm and places it carefully on the nightstand, trying not to smile.

"I'll let you know in a minute, sweetheart," he says.

Chapter 7: late night, post-fight

Chapter by astronomical_light

Chapter Notes

by astronomical_light

The knock comes after midnight, a series of heavy insistent thuds that resonate through the door like whoever's on the other side is slamming into it with the side of their fist instead of their knuckles.

Austin knows it's Callum. He doesn't even bother to check, flipping the lock and wrenching the door open even though he should ignore it. He should sleep on it, make Callum try again tomorrow, but he can't help himself, not when it comes to Callum—and it's not like he was going to get any sleep tonight, anyway. Callum smiles wide as Austin plants his feet in the doorway and crosses his arms over his chest, and it makes Austin's nostrils flare with irritation. The anger from earlier is still simmering under his skin, close enough to the surface to know that letting Callum in is only going to lead to a blow-out, one way or another.

Callum's smile would be the thing to set it all off if it weren't so strained around the edges.

"What are you doing here?" Austin asks, jaw tensing when Callum takes a step into his space.

Callum leans forward, and the brim of his ever-present cap knocks against Austin's brow line. "Why don't you let me in and find out?"

Austin turns and walks away without replying, disappearing into the kitchen without a care if Callum's following or not. Not shutting the door in Callum's face is answer enough, and Callum's made it clear he has no qualms doing whatever the fuck he wants, regardless of Austin's opinion on the matter.

He's not so sure how he feels about the fact he keeps *letting* Callum get away with the type of shit he wouldn't stand for, coming from anyone else.

Austin switches on the under-cabinet lights instead of going for the overhead. Tension pulsates across his temples, and he pulls down a

clean glass, filling it with fresh water from the filter. He drinks half of it before he hears Callum's footsteps approach from behind him, and he forces himself to finish the rest before he finally speaks.

"I'm not hashing this out with you again," he says, carefully setting the glass down in the sink. The dishwasher is already running; he'll have to deal with it tomorrow. He stares down at the counter, tracing the inclusions in the granite as he times his breathing. "You were so far out of line I don't even think you understand there was a line to begin with."

"*I'm* out of line?" Callum asks. "You're the one who wildly overreacted." Austin digs his heels into the tile and pivots to face him, a single four-count breath away from throwing Callum directly out of the door he waltzed in through, but Callum spreads his arms in surrender. "I'm not here to relitigate anything."

Austin leans back until the bite of the drawer handle digging into his spine is enough to make him want to wince. He doesn't. "So what are you here for, then?"

Callum looks at him, eyebrows slanting up in a way that says *really?* without him having to say any words at all. Austin waits him out, staring silently as Callum takes his hat off to rake a hand through his hair, scratching at his scalp before situating it back on his head, tipped up at a crooked angle. An errant curl sticks straight out from over his ear, and Austin wants to wrap it around his finger and yank until it pulls a needy moan out of the back of Callum's throat.

"Christ, you're impossible, sometimes," Callum mutters, taking a half-step toward Austin.

Austin pushes himself off of the counter. "You're one to fucking talk."

They collide in a desperate crash of mouths, teeth knocking together in misalignment. Austin roughly spins Callum's hat backwards, pulling some of his hair with the force of it, and Callum groans, wanton and wanting. Austin licks into his open mouth, clutching at the nape of Callum's neck hard enough he wouldn't be surprised to find crescent-shaped lines in the shape of his fingernails there tomorrow, and the thought alone is enough to make him dig deeper, to ensure a lasting mark.

"You drive me *crazy,*" Austin tells him, marching him out of the kitchen. He doesn't even try to steer them toward the guest room, stumbling toward his bedroom, every uncoordinated step punctuated

with lips and tongue and teeth.

Callum detours them toward the couch, and Austin can't find it in himself to object.

"I'm pretty sure that's my line," Callum says, breaking away with a heaving breath. He toes his shoes off and then undoes his belt one-handed, shoving his jeans and briefs down in one fell swoop until he's left standing there like an idiot in his socks and oversized t-shirt, hem bunched up over where he's fully hard, cock jutting up toward his stomach. He circles his finger through the air as Austin stares. "Your turn, mate, don't leave me hanging."

Austin tugs at the back of his collar to strip off his shirt, throwing it to the floor. He leans down to step out of his sweatpants, and Callum shoves him onto the couch before he can stand up again, laying him out flat and unceremoniously crawling into his lap.

"Now, if you're not lying," Callum says, tone breezy enough it immediately has the hair on Austin's arms standing up on end in trepidation, "then we won't have any problems with this."

Austin doesn't get the chance to ask him what the hell he's talking about, because the next thing he knows Callum is grabbing the base of his dick and sinking down to the hilt in a move so smooth Austin doesn't even have time to gasp before he's balls-deep.

Callum rolls his hips, and the drag of Austin inside him is only a little dry, but nowhere near as dry as it ought to be. Austin blinks, struck dumb with the revelation that Callum came prepared for this, that Callum *planned this*. Anything he could possibly say gets erased when Callum braces his hands against Austin's chest and lifts himself up slow just to fuck himself down again, his mind whiting out at the shock of pleasure, at nothing separating him from feeling the full affect of Callum's tight heat.

Austin swears, bending a knee to plant the sole of his foot on the couch cushion for leverage, thrusting up in time with Callum's demanding rhythm. He's still wearing his shirt, still wearing his stupid fucking hat, and Austin wants it all off, wants to see all of him there is to see.

He grabs Callum by the waist and hoists himself up, rucking Callum's shirt up as he goes. "Take this off," he insists, smacking Callum's cap off of his own volition to tangle his fingers in Callum's curls and draw him into a messy kiss.

Callum laughs into Austin’s mouth, but he does as he’s told, and then Austin has a lap full of warm, pale skin at his disposal. The tape on Callum’s shoulder catches on Austin's fingers when he skims his hands up his arms. It's peeling at the edges, adhesive giving way to the sweat and grime of back-to-back fifteen hour shoots. Austin should help him re-tape it in the morning, but for now he dips his head to bite at Callum’s pec, sucking a mark into the border of where the tape ends as he starts to rock his hips again, restarting the rhythm they’d lost.

“I really don’t think this is how normal people resolve an argument,” Austin says, nipping Callum’s collarbone before leaving a trail of open-mouthed kisses up the column of his throat on the way to his jaw.

“Mmm,” Callum hums as Austin nuzzles into the curve of his neck, stubble roughly scraping over his skin. “Maybe,” he says, “but who wants normal, anyway?”

End Notes

we are just having fun splashing around in the swimming pool of this universe for now, so updates are at the whim of where our heart takes us. feel free to drop a comment or shoot either of us an ask with any considerations, and you never know, we might decide to run with it ;)

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